renewed hostilities and a nuclear arms race between the two countries and the likelihood of nuclear weapons falling into terrorist hands?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Government have called on the international community to act concertedly to ensure that Pakistan should be forthwith compelled to abandon its weapons-oriented nuclear programme.

Government have conveyed to the US Government that the transfer of sophisticated and high performance weapons systems to Pakistan, including F-16 aircraft which are capable of delivering nuclear weapons, would adversely affect India's security and would compel India to take all steps necessary to counter this.

Government remain committee to take all steps n sary to safeguard India's national security.

Supply of F-16 and other US Arms to Pakistan

6182. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that US administration is moving to amend the Pressler Law to increase the arms supply, including the F-16 fighter-planes to Pakistan;

(b) whether it is a fact that the supply of F-16 to Pakistan would increase tensions and encourage Pakistan to mount the trans-border export of terrorist activities in India;

(c) whether Government have taken any step to meet this challenge;

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government are aware that during the Pakistani Prime Minister's recent visit to the US, President Clinton stated that he intended to seek flexibility from the US Congress in the Pressler Amendment. The US Administration is expected to present proposals to Congress in this regard, which could also look at questions relating to transfer of F-16 aircraft the other military equipment to Pakistan.

(b) Supply of F-16s to Pakistan will greatly enhance Pakistan's offensive capability, and thereby, affect the security climate in the region. This might also embolden Pakistan to strengthen further its support to terrorist activities in India.

(c) and (d) Government have conveyed to the US Government that although the Pressler Amendment was a bilateral issue between the US and Pakistan, the transfer of sophisticated and high performance weapons systems to Pakistan, including F-16 aircraft which are capable of delivering nuclear weapons, would adversely affect India's security and would compel India to respond. Government remain committee to take all steps necessary to ensure defence preparedness based on its assessment of the threats posed to India's national security.

US Assurance to Pak to Relax of Pressler Amendment

6183. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Pak Prime Minister managed to extract a promise from the US President that he would ask the US Congress to relax the Pressler Amendment which prohibits US military aid to Pakistan; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto and its likely impact on the defence preparedness of India?;

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) During the Pakistan Prime Minister's recent visit to the US, President Clinton stated that he intended to seek flexibility from the US Congress in the Pressler Amendment so that the US and Pakistan can have some economic and military cooperation.

(b) Government have conveyed to the US Government that, although the Pressler Amendment was a bilateral issue between the US and Pakistan, the transfer of sophisticated and high performance weapons systems to Pakistan, including F-16 aircraft which are capable of delivering nuclear weapons, would adversely affect India's security and would compel India to take all steps necessary to counter this. Government remain committed to take all steps necessary to safeguard India's national security.

Setback in Pak's Efforts to withdraw US Sanctions

6184. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the efforts of the Pak Prime Minister to persuade the US to withdraw sanctions against her country suffered a major setback for the revelation of Islamabad's quietly constructing a nuclear reactor which gives access to substantial quantities of plutonium for more powerful weapon than it now possesses;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government and the steps taken in regard thereto;

(c) whether the Foreign Minister of Pakistan had any discussions with the Congressmen and he was confident that the US would repeal or modify the Pressler Amendment by this year end; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) A report about the construction of a secret nuclear reactor in Khushab, Pakistan appeared in the Washington Post during Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's recent visit to the US. This revealed the true intentions of Pakistan's nuclear programme. Pakistan has been pursuing a clandestine weapons oriented nuclear programme for the past several years, which remains a cause of serious concern for us. Government constantly monitor all developments having a bearing on India's security and will continue to take all necessary measures in this regard.

(c) and (d) Government is not aware of any specific discussions between the Foreign Minister of Pakistan and US Congressmen on the Pressler Amendment. Nevertheless, Government has conveyed to the US authorities that the transfer of sophisticated and high performance weapons to Pakistan, including F-16 aircraft, which are capable of delivering nuclear weapons, could adversely affect India's security and would compel necessary measures from our side.

भारत और ईरान के बीच रेल परिवहन सुविधा

6185. **श्री गोविन्दराव आदिक:** क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या भारत सरकार, भारत-ईरान रेल परिवहन परियोजना को कार्यान्वित करने पर विचार कर रही है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण है?

विदेश मंत्री (श्री प्रणव मुखर्जी): (क) से (ग) भारत और ईरान के बीच द्विपक्षीय सहयोग के लिए रेलवे क्षेत्र को सम्भावना सम्पन्न क्षेत्र माना गया है। ईरान में रेलवे परियोजनाओं में भारत की सहभागिता के सम्बन्ध में हाल ही में बातबीत हुई है। इन परियोजनाओं में अहवाज-बंडर-इमाम सिगनलिंग परियोजना, बफ्ख-मेशाद और केरमान-जाहीडान रेल लाइनें बिछाना तथा तेहरान मेट्रो वर्कशाप शामिल है। इन परियोनजाओं के वित्त पोषण से सम्बन्धित समस्याएं बाधक बनी हुई है।

Visit of a Thai Parliamentary Committee

6186. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Thai Parliamentary Committee on Religion, Art and Culture visited places of Buddist Interest in India in September, 1994;

(b) if so, whether the Committee visited Nagpur in Maharashtra where the